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THE MUTUAL RELATION OF THE PROFESSION AND THE PUBLIC.*

BY

D. MACKINTOSH, M.D., Pugwash, N.S.

It appears to me that in these periodical gatherings of ours we are so much engrossed with the scientific aspect of medicine that we lose sight almost altogether of the ethics of our profession.

I have, therefore, thought it not unwise on the present occasion to depart from the traditional custom of my predecessors to devote a few observations to a subject which I deem to be of very great importance, not only to the members of our profession, but also to the public in general, namely: "The Mutual Relation of the Profession and the Public."

In dealing with a subject of this kind, I must necessarily say some things that would be out of place before a purely professional audience. In other words, my audience being promiscuous, my remarks must be of the same character.

I.

ATTITUDE OF THE PUBLIC TO THE PROFESSION.

Let us first enquire as to the present attitude of the public towards us as a profession. Is it one of confidence and respect? If not what are some of the causes contributing to this condition of things?

That there is not that measure of confidence and respect manifested towards us by the lay members of society which we have a right to expect is painfully evident. That there is adequate reason for this is not so clear. Does the fault lie with the public, or are there elements of weakness in our own ranks to account for it? To be able without prejudice to place the blame where it belongs requires careful discrimination.

* Read before the Annual Meeting of the Medical Society of Nova Scotia, July 4, 1900.